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First Committee
8th Meeting
Friday, 20 October 1995, 3 p.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Erdenechuluun (Mongolia)

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Hoffman (Germany), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda items 57 to 81 *(continued)*

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Acting Chairman: With the concurrence of the Committee, I propose to call on the representative of France, who would like to make a short statement on behalf of France, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Mrs. Bourgois (France) *(interpretation from French)*: I do indeed wish to speak on behalf of the delegations of the United States, the United Kingdom and France. Our three delegations wish to present to the First Committee the statement made jointly today by our three Governments concerning the Treaty of Rarotonga. This statement has a direct bearing on the concerns expressed in our Committee by a number of delegations.

I would like simply to read out the statement:

"The Governments of the French Republic, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America believe that internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned, can contribute to international peace and security. The 1995 [Non-Proliferation Treaty] NPT Review and Extension Conference recognized this fact and encouraged the creation of such zones as a matter of priority. The Conference also recognized that the cooperation of all the nuclear-weapon States and their respect and support for the relevant Protocols is necessary for the maximum effectiveness of such nuclear-weapon-free zones and the relevant protocols. In this regard, we are jointly announcing today our intention to sign the relevant Protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga in the first half of 1996.

The Acting Chairman: I now call on Ambassador Luvsangiin Erdenechuluun of Mongolia, who will speak in his capacity as Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

Mr. Erdenechuluun (Mongolia) (Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission): Let me first say how pleased I am to see you, Sir, chairing this meeting of the First Committee. I believe it is my prerogative to say that.

In my capacity as the current Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, I have the honour to introduce the report of the Commission for its 1995 session, as contained in document A/50/42. As in previous years, the report consists of four chapters and an annex, setting forth the result of its deliberations on various disarmament items on the agenda during its 1995 substantive session. Chapter IV sets out the conclusions and reports of the subsidiary bodies, which duly reflect the status of deliberations on various disarmament issues that the Commission has achieved this year.

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The Disarmament Commission organized its 1995 session in accordance with the mandate set forth in paragraph 118 of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in 1978, as well as the guidelines set by the reform programme entitled "Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission", which was unanimously adopted by the Commission in 1990.

It should be pointed out that, pursuant to the reform programme, the Commission at its organizational session decided to include three substantive items in its agenda. They are: first, "Process of nuclear disarmament in the framework of international peace and security, with the objective of the elimination of nuclear weapons"; secondly, "International arms transfers, with particular reference to General Assembly resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991", and thirdly, "Review of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade". Three working groups were established to deal with these agenda items.

The first item, regarding nuclear disarmament, has been generally considered the most difficult owing to the nature of the subject. Its wide scope further hampers efforts to reach agreement on certain specific topics for deliberations in depth. Thus it is not surprising that the Commission has not been able to make substantive progress on it during the past years. Although bilateral progress in nuclear disarmament has been made with START I and II and unilateral disarmament measures such as withdrawal of tactical nuclear weapons have been taken, multilateral forums, which have made considerable progress, have yet to conclude specific agreements in nuclear disarmament, particularly on issues such as a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, security assurances, a cut-off of fissile material for weapons purposes, and appropriate procedures for the transfer of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. These are, in fact, pertinent issues associated with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), especially the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference.

The item on nuclear disarmament had been prolonged for an additional year by the Commission with the hope that it would benefit from the success of the NPT Conference this year for a reasonable conclusion. However, the outcome of the 1995 NPT Conference — at which the Treaty was extended indefinitely but no agreement could be reached on a final declaration regarding implementation of the provisions of the Treaty — had a clear and significant impact on the deliberations on the nuclear issues in the Disarmament Commission.

The Commission thus failed to reach agreement on its item regarding nuclear disarmament and it ended up as the victim of the mixed legacy of the 1995 NPT Conference. Such a legacy had a similar impact on those nuclear issues inherent in the third item, regarding the "Review of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade" and failed to reach any agreement, despite the fact that it was possible for agreement to be reached on the other non-nuclear issues. As may be recalled, this appraisal of the situation was forcefully expressed by a large number of delegations in their concluding statements. A view expressed by many, which I fully share, was that the failure to reach consensus on two items this year should not constitute a pretext for calling into question the important role of the Commission in the field of disarmament.

On the other hand, Working Group II, on the item regarding international arms transfers, which the Vice-Chairman of the First Committee chaired, was able to agree on the scope and structure of the guidelines to be elaborated as well as on elements to be included in such guidelines. During the course of deliberations, it appeared that all Member States attached great importance to the issue, particularly the illicit arms trade, and that there is political will to reach agreement on various principles and on ways and means to deal with the issue. At the 1995 session, a good foundation has been laid and it is expected that the Commission will be able to conclude this item successfully in 1996.

With respect to the organization of work of the Commission in 1995, I am grateful to note that the implementation of the reform programme, with the cooperation of all delegations, has enabled the Commission to finalize the procedural and organizational matters on time, prior to the substantive session. In this regard, I believe that the pre-session consultations that were held were extremely useful and contributed greatly to the organization of the work of the Commission this year.

Another organizational issue is the number of the substantive agenda items for the 1996 session of the Commission. In view of the conclusion of two of the three substantive items this year and the availability of two slots for new items for next year, proposals should be put forward for consideration at the forthcoming organizational session of the Commission in December. It is therefore expected that intensive consultations will be required at this session of the General Assembly in order to finalize the decision at the Commission's organizational session.

Finally, I should not fail to express my gratitude to all delegations for their understanding and the businesslike manner in which they conducted the work of the Commission this year. Special tribute should be paid to the members of the Bureau of the Commission, in particular the eight Vice-Chairmen, the Rapporteur of the Commission, Mr. Alaa Issa of Egypt and the Chairmen of the three Working Groups, namely, Ambassador Luis Valencia Rodriguez of Ecuador, Ambassador Wolfgang Hoffmann of Germany and Ambassador Ibrahim Gambari of Nigeria, for their full cooperation and hard work in fulfilling the tasks entrusted by the Commission. On behalf of the Commission, I should also like to express thanks to the staff of the Centre for Disarmament Affairs for the valuable assistance, particularly to the Director of the Centre for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Prvoslav Davinic, and the Secretary of the Disarmament Commission, Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung, as well as their colleagues serving as secretaries of the three Working Groups. On behalf of the Commission, I express my sincere appreciation to all other members of the Secretariat who assisted the Commission in carrying out its tasks.

Now I present the annual report of the United Nations Disarmament Commission as contained in document A/50/42.

The Acting Chairman: I thank the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission for his report on the substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission held this year.

Mr. Yativ (Israel): It is a privilege for me to extend to Mr. Erdenechuluun my congratulations on his election as Chairman of the First Committee. The members of my delegation and myself wish to assure him of our fullest cooperation in the deliberations of this Committee. We are confident that the Chairman and the other distinguished officers of the Bureau will steer the work of this Committee with wisdom, skill and competence.

The international community has recently witnessed a remarkable development enhancing the momentum of the peace process in the Middle East. The Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority have embarked on a new stage on the road to peaceful relations and reconciliation. Following the signing of the Declaration of Principles in September 1993, and the Gaza-Jericho Agreement in May 1994, Israel and the Palestinian Authority signed, in Washington on 28 September 1995, the interim agreement that prescribes the gradual broadening of Palestinian self-government in the West Bank. This breakthrough is another milestone facilitating the ushering in of a new era in the relations between the two peoples — an era of cooperation, mutual respect and common interests.

Building confidence is an absolute prerequisite for defusing tensions and hostilities. The long-desired goal of comprehensive and lasting peace in the region can also benefit from the enhancement of confidence-building. This in turn can lay the basis, at an appropriate time, for a meaningful process of arms control in the Middle East.

The multilateral talks are a central component of the peacemaking process. The Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security is dedicated to the task of seeking cooperative solutions to security problems pertaining to our region. At a time when the bilateral process is producing tangible results, it is necessary to recall that the multilateral talks are meant to complement the bilateral process. In our view, all States in the region have to join this forum and take part in the overall effort to address regional security problems.

It is also high time to recall and acknowledge the fact that the Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security is and will continue to be the exclusive forum for addressing matters of regional security. It is our hope that such acknowledgement not only by regional States but also by the United Nations and the international community at large. Problems of regional security can be addressed only by the States of a given region. Hence the concept of regionality is the cornerstone of our approach to the matters of security and arms control, and the Working Group is a good illustration of this — a point on which I should like to elaborate.

Israel has repeatedly declared its unqualified support for the principle of non-proliferation. It voted in favour of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) when it was adopted by the General Assembly. Israel also supports the indefinite extension of the NPT.

At the same time, Israel must give due consideration to its position on the nuclear issue. Support for the principle of non-proliferation does not prevent Israel from assessing its own situation. Given the volatile nature of our region, Israel continues to advocate the establishment, in due course, of a nuclear-weapon-free zone — freely and directly negotiated — including mutual verification and encompassing all States of the region. On the effectiveness of such an arrangement, the Secretary-General of the

United Nations, in his report on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, said:

> "A zone can be even more effective in this regard than the NPT, essential as that instrument and its IAEA safeguards systems are." *(A/45/435, para. 109)*

Israel looks forward to the day when conditions in the region will be auspicious for the launching of discussions on a nuclear-weapon-free zone. In progressing towards this end, Israel subscribes to the premise — a premise guiding the peace negotiations — that no issue can be settled in isolation, but that progress in one area, especially that of political accommodation, may lead to progress in other areas as well.

In this respect, Israel supports the following statement of the United Nations Secretary-General in his report of 25 October 1993:

> "... a nuclear-weapon-free zone cannot be conceived of or implemented in a political vacuum, separate from the process of mutual reconciliation." *(A/48/399, para. 22)*

Therefore, in Israel's view, a credible nuclear-weapon-free zone can only set the seal on a durable peace. It cannot possibly precede it. It needs to be recalled that, for the time being, there are regional States that still consider themselves in a state of war with Israel. That being the case, the nuclear issue must not be the subject of any premature attempt to apply an agenda or timetable that does not reflect the reality in the region or the relevant priorities that govern the peacemaking process.

Furthermore, when the nuclear issue is addressed, the process will take place in a regional context, and not in any bilateral framework. Israel's policy on the nuclear issue is therefore based on several principles. The first of these is comprehensiveness. The nuclear issue should be dealt with in the full context of the peace process, as well as of all security problems, conventional and non-conventional. The second principle is that of a regional framework. Nuclear non-proliferation will be achieved and secured only through the establishment of a mutually verifiable nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Thirdly, there is the step-by-step approach. Practicality dictates that the process be begun with confidence- and security-building measures, the parties establishing peace relations and, in due course, complementing the process by dealing with conventional and non-conventional arms control, where priorities are assigned to systems that experience has proved to be destructive and destabilizing. The fourth principle is the primacy of the peace process. Negotiations on all issues concerning the security of the region must be free and direct, as they are, in fact, conducted in the bilateral and multilateral talks, within the framework of the peace process.

In this regard, the Secretary-General's report of 2 August 1995 on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East says:

> "In this connection, the Secretary-General is pleased to note that the matter has continued to receive attention in the framework of the multilateral Middle East peace process, particularly in the context of the Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security." *(A/50/325, para. 5)*

Israel feels that the challenges to its security, as well as to the peace process, coupled with the volatility of the region, call for caution against any precipitate renunciation of its agenda for the realization of a Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone. Israel cannot jeopardize its security. Solutions to regional problems need to be tailored to the needs of the region. In this regard, time has an important role to play.

On 3 March 1995 a joint declaration was made by President Mubarak, King Hussein, Israel's Prime Minister, Mr. Yitzhak Rabin, and Chairman Arafat. This stated:

> "within the framework of peace and reconciliation in the region, with enhanced security, economic prosperity and a higher standard for their peoples, the leaders reaffirmed their intention to achieve equal security and mutual confidence at lower levels of armament."

Notwithstanding its concept of regionality, Israel feels that, where appropriate, global arrangements can complement regional agreements. In March this year Israel acceded to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. The Government of Israel views this Convention as being primarily humanitarian in nature. As such, it has a supportive role to play at the regional level. The accession of Israel to the Convention on certain conventional weapons demonstrates that, where appropriate, regional-security, arms-control and disarmament agreements in the Middle East could be complemented by global arrangements. Therefore Israel hopes that all States in the

Middle East will accede to this Convention as an important step towards regional security and stability.

Israel has manifested a similar effort in respect of the global land-mines crisis. Of all forms of post-conflict crisis, this is undoubtedly is the most widespread and pernicious. Its scope and magnitude are of daunting proportions. Anti-personnel mines are, in effect, real weapons of mass destruction. Thus, mine clearance constitutes a serious humanitarian challenge facing the international community today. The continuing existence of such weapons haunts many countries and prevents both reconciliation and reconstruction.

Addressing the world-wide effort to reduce the damage caused by anti-personnel land-mines, the Government of Israel decided on a two-year moratorium on the transfer of such devices. Israel is also prepared to consider extending know-how and assistance where they are needed.

The principle of transparency in armaments should be supported by all countries of our region. However, as each country has different security considerations, perceptions on such issues differ. Since transparency in armaments has an impact on the security of the region, it is necessary to subject any security measures to relevant regional considerations. Measures such as the exchange of information, advance notification of certain military activities and the exchange of information on unusual military activities have been dealt with in the multilateral talks. This is a cooperative effort in confidence- and security-building that it is to be hoped will yield positive results and will contribute to the defusing of tensions.

As it has stated hitherto, Israel continues to maintain a constructive and positive attitude towards the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. Israel has repeatedly called for the elimination of chemical weapons and the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free from chemical weapons. Israel was among the first original signatories of the Chemical Weapons Convention in January 1993 in Paris. Referring to our region, the Foreign Minister of Israel, Mr. Shimon Peres, said on that occasion:

> "The chemical Convention must refer itself to our region and the region at large must adhere to its principles and comply with its provisions."

We still hope that all States of the region will adhere to this Convention, which should be treated on its merits and its universality guaranteed. No linkage should be acceptable between this Convention and any other issue. Unfortunately, several States of the region are still armed with chemical weapons and we sincerely hope that this will come to an end. The abolishment of chemical weapons and the creation of a region free of chemical weapons are important to the consolidation of the peace process and the stability of the region.

Israel has on a number of occasions expressed its support in principle of a total ban on nuclear-test explosions. Consequently, Israel is playing an active role in the comprehensive test-ban treaty negotiations currently taking place in Geneva. Israel hopes that these negotiations will bear fruit and lead to a universal and verifiable convention that will totally ban nuclear-test explosions. Israel believes that the future organization to be set up under the convention should enable each State party to exercise its rights in the various organs on an equal and non-discriminatory basis. A global and universally applicable comprehensive test-ban treaty will no doubt play a supportive role at the regional level as well. Hence, Israel expects all States in the Middle East to adhere to the treaty as an important step towards regional security.

Israel's bold decisions within the peace process and the actions it takes in the multilateral Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security and in non-proliferation issues in general demonstrate its positive contribution to peace and the goal of non-proliferation.

Let me conclude by saying that this is indeed an opportune moment in the history of our region which augurs well for the solution of regional problems and the achievement of peace and stability. It is incumbent upon us to use this momentum for further progress and at the same time to inculcate in all a sense that the peace process in all its facets, bilateral and multilateral, deserves the unqualified support and encouragement of the international community.

The United Nations is celebrating its fiftieth anniversary. This is an auspicious and unique opportunity to bestow its unreserved support upon the peacemaking process and thus contribute to peace and reconciliation in the region.

Mr. Moher (Canada): Let me first congratulate our Chairman and you, our Acting Chairman, on your elections to the responsible positions you hold at this historic session

of the First Committee. We look forward to working with you and others to make this session a positive one.

Each year, as we begin our work in this Committee, we should recall our Charter-given responsibility

> "to consider the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, including the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments [and to] make recommendations with regard to such principles".

This is a task that continues to be vital and challenging as we adjust our efforts to address the broad international security agenda both to encourage and reinforce the positive evolution of its underlying structure and to counteract negative developments. We must, accordingly, focus on each of these. What can we do concerning the former? What must we do in confronting the latter?

In addressing the former, we must pursue measures designed to confirm and reinforce progress made in recent years in transforming the earlier confrontational global agenda. While differences and tensions will never wholly disappear, we do have a greater opportunity for cooperation. As regards the latter, we must acknowledge that the possibility of significant conflict, regionally and internally, remains. Our action list, therefore, is clear.

We must continue to make progress in reducing the past, present and future risks posed by the proliferation — vertical and horizontal — of weapons of mass destruction. The past should not dictate the future. We must build on steps taken to reduce the risk of conventional conflict and we must accelerate efforts to build cooperation and cooperative structures. This demands national and multilateral action, each reinforcing the other.

Turning first to weapons of mass destruction, we must re-devote ourselves to two simple objectives: reducing the number of existing weapons and preventing the spread of such weapons. This requires the following:

As regards nuclear weapons, Canada accords great importance to our decisions in May 1995 to extend the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to adopt the statement of Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament and to initiate strengthened reviews. Canada wants to ensure that this package of decisions is fully implemented.

Nuclear testing by all States must cease now. Moreover, a comprehensive test-ban treaty by mid-1996 is an essential and vital goal, attainable if we commit ourselves to that end. The treaty must ensure the definitive and binding end to nuclear testing that we all seek.

The Conference on Disarmament should move forward on substantive negotiations in 1996 on a convention to cut off the production of fissionable material for nuclear weapons. The two major nuclear-weapon States must continue to reduce their nuclear inventories. START I must be fully implemented; START II must be ratified and implemented; START III and beyond must become real objectives. Other nuclear-weapon States must join in the reduction of nuclear arsenals and we must encourage progress in establishing and reinforcing nuclear-weapon-free zones. In this regard, we welcome the statement made by the Ambassador of France a few minutes ago in this Committee.

Canada hopes strongly that we will be able to deal with each of these in a positive and pragmatic way in the weeks ahead. In doing so, we have to remain keenly aware of two other priority areas.

As regards chemical weapons, I am pleased to announce that Canada's Foreign Minister, André Ouellet, recently deposited Canada's instrument of ratification for the Chemical Weapons Convention, making Canada the thirty-ninth State to do so. The entry into force of this Convention is an urgent matter and we again call on all States to ratify the Convention as soon as possible.

On biological weapons, we welcome the work of the Ad Hoc Group designed to strengthen the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction and look forward, in particular, to its conclusions on verification measures. The fourth Review Conference of the Convention, to be held in 1996, must be instrumental in bolstering confidence in the effective implementation of that Convention.

While we must address the ambitious programme I have just outlined, we must also make progress on conventional weapons. First, Canada is deeply disappointed that the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects did not achieve what was within our grasp: a meaningful broadening of the scope of the Convention to include

internal conflicts, prohibitions and restrictions concerning land-mines, especially anti-personnel mines, provisions governing transfers and an appropriate inquiry-compliance mechanism. Canada continues to advocate the elimination of land-mines, recognizing that this goal will take a considerable time to achieve; the objectives just cited are attainable steps in that direction. Thus, while we welcome the conclusion of a new Protocol banning the use of blinding laser weapons — and you, Mr. Chairman, played a particularly key role in that regard, and I congratulate you for doing so — the overall lack of results from the Review Conference is very disappointing. When we resume our work in January in Geneva we must deliver substantively on all the issues mentioned above.

Secondly, we should enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. For the calendar year 1994, only 83 Member States have submitted data. Our goal is universality. In 1997, experts will gather again to discuss the performance and necessary evolution of the Register. Many of the relevant issues are not new. Canada favours the expansion of the Register to include military holdings and procurement through national production. And once we have ensured transparency, we should move to enhanced consultations on the basis of the data and information then available.

To promote the universalization of the Register, Canada will be circulating for the use of Member States a short paper describing the way in which Canada compiles and submits its data, including our interpretation of the categories. This paper, which we would describe as a "user's guide", is designed to be a helpful tool, which we hope will assist countries in compiling their data. My delegation would also like to share informally with Member States another document which we believe may be useful as background material for those interested in the Register and the broader issue of conventional arms transfers — an annotated bibliography of publications on the Arms Register.

In looking at conventional weapons, we should keep in mind the linkage between military expenditures and development. The accumulation of arms and the creation of large military establishments in any country can fuel situations of tension and divert resources from necessary social and economic development. Mechanisms to reduce the risks posed by regional and internal tensions, as well as restraint on arms expenditures, should be our twin objectives.

Against the background of these comments, Canada will be asking for the support of all Member States on four draft resolutions which we will present to this Committee, relating to the Chemical Weapons Convention, cut-off, verification, and science and technology.

On the Chemical Weapons Convention, we will be seeking support for a consensus resolution calling on all States to sign and ratify the Convention and to work for its early implementation. On cut-off, we will be seeking a consensus resolution supporting an early start — in 1996 — to the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament.

On verification, we are seeking recognition of the report on the role of the United Nations in verification which was prepared by a Group of Governmental Experts over the past two years. This is the only expert report to be submitted during this fiftieth anniversary session of the United Nations. The overall aim of this resolution is, within available financial resources, to advance in a positive and forward-looking manner consideration of the role of verification, in the United Nations system and more broadly.

On science and technology, we will be seeking support for a resolution to encourage wider dialogue with a view to establishing guidelines for transfers of science and technology for peaceful purposes. There is, we believe, general agreement on the importance of facilitating the transfer of science and technology while ensuring that such transfers are not turned to non-peaceful purposes.

In conclusion, I wish to emphasize that the Canadian delegation looks forward to working with the Chairman and all other delegations to achieve these goals.

Mr. Al-Hassan (Oman) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: There is no doubt that this fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations convenes at a historic juncture that requires us all to take stock of the Organization's past achievements and failures, for no other reason but the defining of those aspects that call for stronger efforts and solidarity on our part in order for us to attain the desired results.

Proceeding from this, and in view of the content of that most important of documents, the United Nations Charter, the main pillar of our work, we find that, notwithstanding the great efforts deployed in considering the issues of peace, security and disarmament, regrettably, the results that have been achieved so far fall short of our aspirations when the Organization was established 50 years ago. Weapons of mass destruction still pose a grave threat

to international peace and security; it can even be said that the threat has become much greater.

There is no doubt that the international agreements and instruments that have been concluded to date and have become an integral part of international law have had a far-reaching effect in limiting the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction and have been instrumental in shaping international expectations in this area. Those instruments, however, will ever be a legal mechanism whose effective use will always be the responsibility of their signatories.

Consequently, my delegation wishes to reiterate its call to all Member States effectively and completely to adhere to those agreements and instruments, to renounce any ambitions of domination and hegemony and to pursue policies of good-neighbourliness and peaceful coexistence with all other States of the world and their peoples. Such a stance will be conducive to guaranteeing the mutual benefits of States, to safeguarding the interests of their peoples and to promoting full respect for the sovereignty of States and non-interference in the internal affairs of others.

We pride ourselves on the fact that since the beginning of the 1970s, our country, the Sultanate of Oman, has opted for this rational policy which conforms with the objectives and principles of this Organization, and has made it the guiding principle of its relations with all other States.

With regard to nuclear weapons, we find that although the international community is agreed on the need to speedily rid the world of these overkill weapons of mass destruction, and although the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has been extended indefinitely, it has continued to be one of the paradoxical situations of our age that certain States have continued to believe that the possession of nuclear weapons is a factor of deterrence and balance.

This misconception is unjustified now just as it was in the past, during the cold war years. The international community knows quite well that the devastation caused by that overkill weapon when it was used for the first time should not be repeated. Therefore, the continued stockpiling, development and testing of nuclear weapons lead to nothing but the perpetuation of that threat in the service of short-sighted objectives and ambitions of States, that seek to possess, or to continue to possess, such weapons.

My delegation, while urging all States to renounce the possession of nuclear weapons, calls for the intensification of efforts to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty that would promote the globalization of the non-proliferation regime on a non-selective basis and promote technological exchanges in the nuclear field for peaceful purposes.

With regard to the Middle East, while we welcome the recent positive developments in the region — the signing in Washington of the second phase of the peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, and the upcoming economic summit in Amman, the Jordanian capital, at the end of this month, October 1995 — we hope that the natural step that follows will be a realistic in-depth study of the important issues, especially those which would lead to ridding the region of all weapons of mass destruction and ensure strict respect for the international borders and sovereignty of all the region's States. In this regard, my delegation wishes to reiterate its call to all the countries of the region to engage in serious dialogue and constructive negotiations with the aim of translating into concrete reality the proposal of declaring the Middle East a zone free of weapons of mass destruction. Until such time as this objective is achieved, all the States of the region should refrain from any hostile acts that could damage the ongoing peace process or overshadow future prospects.

With regard to chemical weapons, I should like to note that Oman's signing on 2 February 1993 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction was the result of our close study of the preparatory work done in this respect at the level of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, and of our participation as an observer in the preparatory work that led to the conclusion of this Convention which we consider to be unique in that it aims at removing an entire category of weapons of mass destruction on a non-selective basis, without any discrimination between countries, large or small.

Proceeding from our belief, in the Sultanate of Oman, that this Convention is one of the important tributaries of regional and international security, we call upon those States which have not yet ratified the Convention, to respond, at the earliest, to the call made on 16 October before this Committee by the Executive Chairman of the Preparatory Commission of the Organization on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Mr. Ian Kenyon, so that the Convention may take effect and lead to the establishment of a lasting peace in many areas of the world.

One of the major issues to which my country attaches special importance is the question of the security of the

region of the Indian Ocean, since we are a part of that region and have always been involved in its affairs. We participated in the United Nations Preparatory Commission on the implementation of the Declaration by the General Assembly of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace, and we believe that every effort should be made to reach an understanding conducive to the desired results. We should like also to appeal to all the countries of the Indian Ocean and those that use it to spare no effort in translating the constructive proposal into reality in the interests of all the region's peoples.

The idea of collective security has taken on great significance in the international arena. It is highly regarded by the members of the international community and particularly by small countries, which consider this Organization to be the main pillar of the new world order and the entity most able to translate that idea into reality.

Our era is clearly not very different from previous ones. What is new about it, though, is that humanity, through various international laws and thanks to this Organization, has been able to establish legal rules of a mandatory nature to limit the threat of war and to make our planet more peaceful and secure.

In conclusion, we in the Sultanate of Oman agree with the view that disarmament and international peace and security are intertwined and complement each other in such a way that any progress towards the one is bound to have a positive effect on the other. The world today is called upon, more than ever before, to maintain that security, a duty that will be discharged only through international solidarity amongst all Member States. The main responsibility in that regard devolves to the States that possess huge military arsenals, which should reduce those arsenals through the application of the rules of international law and the conduct of relations between States accordingly. Let us try to create a more peaceful and stable world in the next 50 years of the life of this Organization.

Mrs. Samaté (Burkina Faso) (*interpretation from French*): I should like to take this opportunity to extend to Mr. Erdenechuluun the warm congratulations of the delegation of Burkina Faso. I should like also to extend these congratulations to the other officers of the Committee. You can be assured of my delegation's wholehearted cooperation.

My delegation will be presenting its views on certain items of our agenda in the course of the thematic discussion and we would like to share with the delegations that have spoken earlier some of our concerns and observations.

Fifty years after the founding of the United Nations, five years after the end of the cold war, general and complete disarmament is far from accomplished. More and more the world is witnessing the spread of tension, which only serves to intensify proliferation and the spread of weapons of all types. Today, there are countless examples of this in Africa, in the territory of the former Soviet Union, and elsewhere.

My delegation welcomes the unanimous adoption of the decision for the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). This extension should provide definite momentum for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. We would appeal to the nuclear-weapon States to do everything they can to reduce such weapons, although the ultimate objective is still their complete elimination.

Nevertheless, my delegation is still convinced that the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, particularly for development, must be maintained and promoted. Burkina Faso says this in the belief that cooperation in this field must be encouraged, so that it may become as widespread as possible. In this regard, we would encourage those countries which possess such technology to broaden still further the traditional scope of such cooperation.

My delegation is also convinced that a moratorium on nuclear testing would greatly help to strengthen international peace and security. Such a moratorium would speed up the negotiations and the conclusion in 1996 of a multilateral comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty. On the question of the jurisdiction of fissile material for weapons purposes, Burkina Faso would like to see a convention banning such production for military purposes. It would be desirable, therefore, for greater cooperation to be developed between States possessing nuclear weapons and those that have the potential to acquire such weapons, so that we can control and restrict the spread of fissile material. After more than three decades of appeals and support for the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone on its continent, Africa has just acquired a juridical instrument for this purpose. Burkina Faso would appeal to the nuclear Powers to support the expression of this political will, with a view to its consolidation.

Almost all the hot spots on our planet demonstrate the excessively injurious nature of certain conventional weapons which have indiscriminate effects. The Convention

on Prohibitions or Restrictions on Their Use must be seriously put into effect. The manufacture, sale and use of anti-personnel land-mines should be prohibited. Burkino Faso regrets that discussion on this question was adjourned in Vienna only a few days ago. Here and now we call for the halting of the use of laser weapons, particularly those which lead to irreversible blindness.

Like other Saharo-Sahelian States on the African continent, Burkina Faso has, for some time now, been prey to the problem of the circulation and proliferation of illegal small arms, because of the very freedom of their circulation in the subregion. This constitutes a serious threat today to the populations of these countries. For that reason we became a sponsor of resolution 49/75 G, adopted on 15 December 1994; and in February 1995, we welcomed the Secretary-General's advisory mission on this question. We therefore await with very definite interest the conclusions of this mission.

We wholeheartedly endorse control of conventional weapons at the regional level. However, we regret the proposal for the closing of the regional disarmament centres. It is inconceivable to contemplate such a measure at the very time when the importance of a regional approach to disarmament is becoming ever more widely recognized.

The current political situation opens up broad prospects for disarmament in favour of development — a proposal which, unfortunately, has not gone beyond the stage of a pious hope. On this fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, developing countries, like Burkino Faso, are quite rightly anxious to see, at last, the dividends of disarmament devoted to development. This would also help to strengthen international peace and security. My delegation therefore calls for some meaningful thought to be given to disarmament for development.

Mr. Afeto (Togo) *(interpretation from French)*: Allow me to join previous speakers in expressing to Mr. Erdenechuluun, on behalf of my delegation, our sincere congratulations on his unanimous election as Chairman of the First Committee. I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Luis Valencia Rodríguez, the Permanent Representative of Ecuador, who skilfully conducted the work of this Committee during the forty-ninth session. Lastly, we wish to express our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau, to the Secretary of the Committee, Mr. Sohreb Kheradi, and all of his colleagues for their dedication to the cause of disarmament.

The current session which, happily, coincides with the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, is for our States and Governments a very special opportunity to test our political will and ability to promote the conditions necessary for the United Nations to attain the objectives of disarmament, peace and security, which it set itself. In the past five years, in a new era emerging from this cold war, the world has witnessed many positive events in the field of disarmament and international security. By way of example, I would mention the ratification and the entry into force of START I and START II, the renewal by some nuclear States of their unilateral moratoriums on nuclear testing, the signing of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, and the signing, at the regional and subregional levels, of a number of agreements on peace, disarmament and non-aggression.

Last spring, the Review and Extension Conference of States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was held. As is known, that work led to the indefinite extension of the Treaty. While welcoming the consensus that was achieved on this decision, many countries, including my own, believe that this indefinite extension cannot be considered to be an end in itself, nor should it be an opportunity to seek to perpetuate its discriminatory nature. On the contrary, it is urgently necessary to do everything possible to ensure that, despite the shortcomings one might find in it, the Treaty contributes to a real strengthening of the non-proliferation process.

My delegation hopes that the results of the next review conference will be more edifying so that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) may attain its goals and be assured of universal accession.

My delegation believes that, far from giving grounds for breaking off dialogue, nuclear-test explosions should prompt the Conference on Disarmament to speed up the negotiations under way in order to ensure, as has been agreed, the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty in 1996. My country, which favours the zero option, therefore invites the participants in these negotiations to redouble their efforts and to display mutual understanding in order to overcome their differences so that the treaty can become a reality, preferably before the end of the current session.

Togo notes with satisfaction the recent establishment by the Conference on Disarmament of an Ad Hoc

Committee to negotiate a treaty on the prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. My delegation hopes that nuclear Powers will devote greater attention to the need to draw up, as soon as possible, effective international arrangements to guarantee that non-nuclear-weapon States are protected against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

As the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation stated at the 4th plenary meeting of the General Assembly, on 25 September 1995, during the general debate, nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament must continue to be our main objectives during the post-cold-war period. My country attaches very special importance to the establishment of denuclearized zones throughout the world and, in this connection, welcomes the adoption by the Heads of State and Government of Africa in Addis Ababa last June of the final text of a Treaty on an African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, which the Secretary-General in his report contained in document A/50/426 of 13 September 1995 has submitted to our Committee and the General Assembly for approval.

The delegation of Togo wishes to take this opportunity to invite the international community as a whole to give this treaty which is called the "Pelindaba Treaty" and its various protocols all the support it needs so that we can meet our objectives. We also welcome the entry into force of the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the adoption at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons of a principle relating to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone and a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We hope that similar measures will be taken for the establishment of similar zones elsewhere in the world.

The delegation of Togo therefore welcomed the statement made this afternoon by the delegation of France announcing the intention of France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America to sign the Treaty of Rarotonga during the first half of 1996.

With regard to chemical disarmament, my delegation welcomes the signing by 159 countries of the Chemical Weapons Convention which has so far been ratified by 40 States. My country, which is a signatory, will ratify the Convention in the near future.

Togo is concerned at the use of certain conventional weapons which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects, particularly anti-personnel land-mines, which with every passing day claim countless victims throughout the world, particularly among the civilian population. My delegation, while welcoming the decision taken by many States to adopt unilateral moratoriums on the export of such mines, regrets that the recent Review of the States Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, held in Vienna, was not more successful, apart from the adoption of Protocol IV prohibiting the use of laser weapons. Here, my country would like to reaffirm its commitment to support any initiative designed to strengthen controls on the production and use of mines.

Transparency in the field of weapons is, in the opinion of my delegation, an essential condition for the creation of a climate of confidence among different regions on the one hand, and States of the same region on the other. In this respect, my delegation welcomes the Register of Conventional Arms which is kept by the Secretariat. We reiterate our support for the activities conducted in this context and sincerely hope that its scope of application will be extended to include other data and categories of weapons.

The many positive developments I have just mentioned show that mankind is slowly but surely moving towards general and complete disarmament, which is our dearest hope. However, the race is far from over.

The burgeoning proliferation of conventional weapons, their uncontrolled and illicit sale, excessive stockpiling and the anarchic circulation of small weapons, are now a constant threat to peace and security at the regional and subregional levels. Even more than in the past, the many internal and inter-ethnic conflicts and the different acts of subversion and banditry are maintained by these weapons which, without rigorous action by the international community to control such trafficking, will, for a long time to come, jeopardize any efforts to achieve disarmament and development in our respective regions.

In the face of this curse, a regional approach to disarmament is the best way to help curb this problem. It is therefore important for our States to give the regional approach due importance. It is essential here to re-energize the work of valuable bodies such as United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament in Africa and Asia, and for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, in his report on the three Regional Centres, contained in document A/50/380 of 25 August 1995, recognized and strongly emphasized the importance of the role that such institutions can play in drawing up, at the regional level, confidence-building measures, measures to strengthen social and political stability and the security of States, and to help in the limitation and neutralization of existing arsenals.

My delegation believes that none of these regional activities can be effective and produce the desired results without the contribution and active participation of regional centres which are not, at present, able to carry out their activities properly because of inadequate financial resources.

As you know, the Centres were supposed to operate on the basis of voluntary contributions from States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and foundations. In addition to these voluntary contributions, the General Assembly, pursuant to paragraph 4 of resolution 46/37 F of 9 December 1991, decided that to continue to ensure the financial viability of these centres, their administrative expenditures would be financed from the regular budget of the United Nations. It is regrettable to see that neither Member States nor the Secretary-General have provided these regional centres with the financial support they deserve. The case of the Centre for Africa is particularly alarming. Apart from Togo, which despite its limited means has made huge efforts to cover the arrears in the expenses of the administration, only Algeria, Finland, France, Italy, Norway and Sweden have paid contributions for 1995. My delegation wishes to avail itself of this opportunity during this debate to extend our warmest thanks to the Governments of these six countries.

The Regional Centres are in danger because of the huge financial difficulties facing the United Nations. Given the situation, the Secretary-General said in his report that he would sadly be obliged to suspend the activities of the three offices unless States Members of the United Nations took the necessary measures to regularize the situation. The Secretary-General has sounded the alarm but the bell has not tolled yet.

It is therefore our duty, while there is still time, to save these Centres and to ensure their survival by placing at their disposal the necessary means of action. It is in the interest of the peace and security of our respective nations and regions.

Let us save these Centres, for in order to be effective, regional disarmament activities cannot be conducted at a distance by officials based in New York or Geneva or elsewhere, as recommended in the report of the Secretary-General.

My delegation sincerely believes that the three Centres, without exception, deserve better treatment and to be kept in operation. The task appears to be difficult but the cause is no less just nor is it less in conformity with the goals of the Charter.

Togo is still convinced of the usefulness of these Centres. Their role is of more than prime importance in this period following the cold war, particularly in the field of preventive diplomacy and the peaceful settlement and management of disputes. Given the re-emergence of internal conflicts, which constantly bathe our countries in blood, the General Assembly has a duty to expand the field of activities and the mandates of these Centres so that they may be better able to respond to the requirements and to the rapid and constant changes taking place in the world.

Taking all these considerations into account, my delegation reiterates its support for the three Centres, particularly the Regional Centre for Africa, and urges all Member States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, foundations and all individuals of good will to envisage, here and now, the possibility of contributing in whatever way possible to the collective effort to inject new dynamism into these Regional Centres.

In this respect, my delegation hopes that the draft resolution on this question, which will be submitted jointly by the representatives of the three regional groups with the support of other interested States, will enjoy the unanimous support of delegations for keeping these three Centres in operation.

Since they are linked to development, peace and security are today, as never before, jeopardized more by non-military situations than by armed conflicts. In our common search for an exact and updated re-definition of the concept of security, it is important for us to turn our attention, not towards military deterrence as during the time of the cold war, but towards the search for appropriate and lasting solutions to the various problems which threaten the existence of our populations and which undermine the development of our States. Hunger, disease, drugs, unemployment, social exclusion — these are a few among many other problems, including the arms race, which must be taken into account if we are to establish a true climate

of peace and security in our States and regions so that mankind, freed not only from the spectre of war but also from an uncertain future, may be able to live in freedom and help to build a better world and promote economic and social progress.

Mr. Alkubaisi (Qatar) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: I am pleased to express to Mr. Erdenechuluun our congratulations upon his election to the chairmanship of our Committee. I am convinced that his experience and broad knowledge of questions relating to disarmament will be an earnest of the success of the work of the Committee. I should also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election and express my best wishes for their success.

The road to disarmament is lengthy and arduous but indispensable if the world is to enjoy lasting security and stability, in view of the fact that security and stability are linked to economic and social development and that development requires financial and other resources which are swallowed up by the arms race.

The State of Qatar, like all other countries of the world, calls for according a high priority to nuclear disarmament. That is the reason why the overwhelming majority of countries supported the extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) for an indefinite period. The parties to the Treaty also approved many recommendations foremost among which was the need to ensure the universality of the NPT. Among the measures that would lead to such universality is the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, particularly in regions where tension and conflicts prevail.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones that would be free also of all other weapons of mass destruction is a question of the highest importance in the area of international security.

The State of Qatar, along with other Members of the United Nations, should like to see the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. My country supports the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East as one of the important measures of arms control in the region.

In his report (A/50/325) the Secretary-General stated that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is a question that continues to receive attention in the framework of the multilateral Middle East peace process particularly in the context of the Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security.

The State of Qatar had the honour of hosting from 2 to 5 May 1994, the fifth meeting of this Working Group. A number of the participating States made concrete proposals on ways to continue examining the question and the Secretary-General expressed his satisfaction with regard to the resolution on the Middle East which was adopted without a vote at the Conference of the Parties to the NPT. The resolution stated that the Conference:

> "Endorses the aims and objectives of the Middle East peace process and recognizes that efforts in this regard, as well as other efforts, contribute to, *inter alia*, a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons as well as other weapons of mass destruction," and
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> "Calls upon all States in the Middle East to take practical steps in appropriate forums aimed at making progress towards, *inter alia*, the establishment of an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear, chemical and biological, and their delivery systems, and to refrain from taking any measures that preclude the achievement of this objective."

The Conference called on all States parties to the NPT, particularly the nuclear-weapons States, to extend their cooperation and do their utmost to help the States in the region establish, as soon as possible, a nuclear-weapon-free zone that would be free also of other weapons of mass destruction and of their delivery systems.

On numerous occasions, the State of Qatar, along with other States of the region, has stated that it is committed to the establishment of such a zone, in keeping with the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and with relevant General Assembly resolutions, the most recent being resolution 49/71, which was adopted by consensus on 15 December 1994. The recent positive developments in the Middle East peace process have created conditions which favour the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region. It is obvious that the establishment of such a zone, along with arms limitation in general are among the principal objectives of the peace process. The achievement of those objectives would work in favour of peace and prosperity for all the region's peoples.

It is not contestable that regional security should be ensured for all States on an equal footing, in all its

dimensions. Today, no State can build its own security alone by its own means. Therefore, the maintenance of security in the region is the responsibility of all the countries of the region, without exception. Proceeding from this, the State of Qatar hopes that all States in the region which have not yet become parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will accede to the Treaty and will refrain from developing, producing or testing nuclear weapons or acquiring them by any other means and will renounce nuclear weapons. Qatar hopes that all States of the region which have not yet done so will soon place all their nuclear facilities under the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as an important confidence-building measure and a forward step in the process of promoting peace and security.

We share the concerns expressed at the IAEA General Conference held in September 1995 with regard to the existing grave threats to peace and security created by ongoing nuclear activities in the Middle East that are not solely for peaceful purposes. Similarly, the Conference welcomed initiatives for the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones and for the prohibition of other weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, in the Middle East, as well as other recent steps taken to achieve arms control in the region.

We feel that the efforts of IAEA to establish safeguards in the Middle East emphasize the urgent need for all States in the region to agree to implement the IAEA safeguards regime with regard to all their nuclear activities as an important confidence-building measure and as an important step in promoting peace and security within the framework of nuclear-weapon-free zones. We support the Agency's decision to invite all interested parties to undertake a serious examination of the possibility of taking concrete and appropriate measures to implement the proposal to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East subject to effective and mutual verification.

The advantages of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East are not confined solely to questions of international peace and security or to the consolidation of the disarmament process, particularly nuclear disarmament, at the global level. Indeed, the achievement of this goal has other advantages for all the States of the region in the economic and social spheres as a large part of the budgets of these States is swallowed up by the cost of armaments and the maintenance of large defence forces. If the peace process now under way achieves its desired results, that would facilitate the creation of mutual confidence and peaceful coexistence. It could also promote cooperation in various areas, which would make it necessary to continue to pursue efforts in the fields of armament and military preparedness and, thereby, free financial resources for the region's economic and social problems, raise living standards and make it possible for future generations to hope for a better future.

We have emphasized the importance of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East to security and stability in the region and in the world, as well as to the region's economic and social development. In order for us to attain that goal, we hope that all States will redouble their efforts to achieve the greatest possible degree of *rapprochement* in the region with regard to these questions. We hope for serious discussions amongst the States concerned and look forward to the adoption of confidence-building measures. Support for and acceleration of the peace process will make it possible to achieve these goals and lead to the creation of a climate favourable to world peace and security.

Mr. Sulaiman (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I am making this statement on behalf of the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, Mr. Ahmad Hallak.

The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations raises important questions about the Organization's achievements in the sphere of international peace and security, about the obstacles it has faced and continues to face and the need to enable it to play its role in the disarmament field as well as the need to restructure it in order to make it more democratic and thus more responsive to the great changes that have taken place in the international arena, especially since the end of the cold war.

The indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has deprived it of the important obligations contained in its article VI and has legitimized the possession of nuclear weapons. It is regrettable that the Review Conference was unable to adopt a final declaration and that by failing to do so it has reflected the substantive differences that exist between nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States.

My delegation has reaffirmed the need to establish a clear linkage between the extension of the NPT and the progress achieved in areas that would guarantee the elimination of nuclear weapons, halting of their production and liquidation of their existing stockpiles in all the world's countries without exception. My delegation has called also upon all States of the world, nuclear and non-nuclear, to

accede to the Treaty if it is to achieve its desired results. The universality of the Treaty is the principal objective condition that can ensure for it the credibility it needs if it is to succeed.

The issue of security assurances is of great importance since the assurances stipulated in Security Council resolution 984 (1995) have not created the necessary climate of confidence. While the obligations and responsibilities of nuclear and non-nuclear States have not been evenly balanced, the indefinite extension of the Treaty has perpetuated this imbalance.

Syria was one of the first Middle Eastern States Parties to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1968. In 1989 it called for the Middle East to be declared, through the United Nations, a region free of all weapons of mass destruction, be they biological, chemical or nuclear. Israel, however, did not respond to that call, neither has it responded to the many calls by the United Nations, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of Islamic States. The possession of nuclear weapons by any State in our sensitive region will continue to be cause for concern not only to the peoples of the region but to the world at large. We have repeatedly drawn attention to the danger of Israel's possession of nuclear weapons and its refusal to accede to the NPT or to subject its nuclear facilities to international monitoring and inspection, especially in the existence of the ongoing Middle East peace process. Accession by all States in the Middle East to the NPT would be a vital step towards turning the region into a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction.

My country welcomed the various nuclear disarmament initiatives. It has called for the reduction of nuclear weapons as a step towards the complete elimination of these weapons and of preventing the spread of the arms race to outer space. It has also supported the efforts aimed at halting the production of fission materials for the manufacture of weapons and has always considered a treaty on the prohibition of such production a step towards complete nuclear disarmament and the consolidation of the non-proliferation regime. It is vitally important that a comprehensive test-ban treaty be achieved by the end of 1996, and we hope this will be done.

Transparency in armaments plays an important part in disarmament. We therefore call for expanding the scope of the Register to embrace the national production of weapons of mass destruction, high technology with military applications and all types of conventional weapons. We also call for the well-balanced, non-selective, non-discriminatory application of the Register in order to guarantee the security interests of all States without exception. Such expansion of the Register will make it an international mechanism that would contribute to the consolidation of international peace and stability and promote the credibility of the Register itself.

It is high time the Middle East region enjoyed peace and stability. However, peace and stability can never be achieved by half-measures, by droplets of peace or by agreements that surrender the nation's interests. Israel's failure to abide by United Nations resolutions despite four years of negotiations constitutes a stance of defiance, not only to the Arabs, but also to the rest of the world. The latest developments in the peace process have shown that Israel does not seek a genuine, lasting and comprehensive peace that would put an end to conflict, occupation and settlement and guarantee peace and stability to all.

The aim of the United States' initiative on the basis of which the Madrid conference convened was the achievement of comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace. It was on that basis that Syria opened the door for peace. It was also on that basis that Syria repeatedly committed itself to peace on the basis of the determining principles of the peace process. The negotiations between Syria an Israeli over the past four years have made it clear that Israel negotiates only with no other aim in mind but to equivocate and to elude the requirements of peace. In his recent statement to the General Assembly, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Syria expressed new hope for peace by saying:

> "This is our hope. Peace which is not achieved today will dawn tomorrow. This is what we shall try to achieve looking forward to a better life of justice and humaneness in that it will be built on cooperation between our nations in the political, economic and cultural fields, in the interests of all mankind.
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> "Let us hope that the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations will be a bright beacon of change in the history of mankind." (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 16th meeting, p. 18*)

The establishment of a conceptual link between disarmament and development by giving an impetus to more accelerated progress on the issues of global

development will strengthen the roots of international peace and security and preserve the spirit of understanding, constructive cooperation and genuine political goodwill which are essential for the building of a better and more secure world.

Mrs. Ataeva (Turkmenistan) (*interpretation from Russian*): Permit me sincerely to congratulate Mr. Luvsangiin Erdenechuluun on his election as Chairman of the First Committee and to assure him of our full support and cooperation.

The strengthening of international security, consolidation of regional stability and deepening of the disarmament process, as well as the issue of overcoming the bipolarity of the world, still remain on the agenda of our universal international Organization and its First Committee. Today those problems have acquired a new dimension and pose yet another challenge to mankind in its never-ending quest for peace, harmony and prosperity.

Overcoming the effects of the cold war is linked to the very complex process of eliminating its vestiges, which appear in the form of regional and local conflicts with their attendant problems such as weapons transfers and illegal drug trafficking. The instability still existing in many regions of the world hampers the economic, social and cultural development of States and the establishment of good-neighbourly relations and mutually beneficial cooperation.

Along with other newly independent States, my country is faced with similar obstacles that prevent it from fully realizing its creative potential, which is rooted in its domestic stability, the skill and industriousness of its people, its wealth of natural resources and its sincere desire to cooperate with its neighbours in the region and with all the nations of the world.

As our country is located at the very heart of a vast region comprising Central and South Asia, the Caspian Sea region and the Caucasus, we feel the hot winds from the conflicts that are still on the agenda of the United Nations. Turkmenistan is a small, peace-loving nation that is not involved in any of the existing conflicts or disputes. Good-neighbourliness, peaceableness and neutrality have been the fundamental tenets of our foreign policy ever since our establishment as a sovereign nation.

However, history abounds with grim examples of small States, such as my country, being drawn against their will into the maelstrom of conflicts. By learning the lessons of history and following the national traditions, outlook and will of its people, my country, under the wise leadership of President Saparmurat Niyazov, made its historic choice: to follow a policy of permanent, constructive neutrality. This means that Turkmenistan is ready and willing to play an active part in the peace-making processes carried out under the auspices of the United Nations.

This fundamental tenet of our foreign policy was spelled out in a statement by the President of the country and enshrined in its principal legal document, the Constitution. On 16 March 1995 the Majlis, or Assembly, of Turkmenistan adopted a resolution in which it endorsed this principle as the basis of Turkmenistan's foreign policy.

The momentous decision to follow a policy of permanent neutrality has been recognized and supported by the States of the region. During the summit meeting of the Organization of Economic Cooperation held in Islamabad in March of 1995, this historic choice made by Turkmenistan was endorsed by the Heads of State and Government of our region. The Government of my country is grateful to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for the support he has given to our policy of permanent neutrality.

By persistently seeking to endorse this principle of permanent neutrality in its foreign policy, Turkmenistan became a full-fledged member of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries during its summit meeting recently held in Cartagena, Colombia. In his statement, the head of the Turkmen delegation underscored the close affinity between the principles of non-alignment and neutrality, bearing in mind, in particular, modern trends in the development of international relations.

It is worth mentioning that the position taken by Turkmenistan was recognized and supported by the participants in the Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement. It was with appreciation that the Conference took note of Turkmenistan's desire to play a constructive role in a civilized settlement of the Afghan conflict and the intra-Tajik dialogue.

Turkmenistan is determined to follow its policy of neutrality and intends to actively develop mutually beneficial relations with all States of the world and, above all, with its neighbours. We are against an interpretation of neutrality as self-isolation and passivity. My country wishes to actively promote observance of the rules of international law as well as the principles of coexistence enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

When States choose to follow a policy of neutrality, it is their sovereign right and prerogative to do so. However, the importance of recognition for such status by the international community and of respect for it cannot be overestimated. In 1815, the Congress of Vienna laid down the foundations of the permanent neutrality of Switzerland, and the four Power Conference held in 1955 laid down the foundations of the permanent neutrality of Austria. The Government of Turkmenistan attaches great importance to the recognition of its policy of permanent neutrality by the international community through its highest forum — the United Nations.

In the course of the current session of the General Assembly, my delegation intends to submit a resolution on the permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan for consideration by the First Committee under item 81 of the agenda, entitled "Maintenance of international security". Consultations that I have been conducting on this question with my fellow ambassadors testify to their understanding of, and support for, the historic choice made by Turkmenistan and provide good grounds for optimism. I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to you to support my country's efforts by endorsing its policy of permanent neutrality. We are sincerely convinced that by following this policy our newly independent State will make a more tangible contribution to the maintenance of peace, security and stability in the world.

Finally, I would like to wish the Chairman and the First Committee every success in their endeavours.

Mr. Muhayrah (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Allow me, first of all, to join previous speakers in expressing to the Chairman and his friendly country my congratulations on his election as Chairman of this Committee. Allow me also to take this opportunity to congratulate the Vice-Chairman and the Rapporteur.

The First Committee of the General Assembly, which discusses questions of international peace and security and disarmament, meets now in the atmosphere of commemoration of the United Nations fiftieth anniversary. In view of the fact that disarmament cannot be dissociated from international security, the two issues have continued to figure on the Committee's agenda from the beginning to the present moment in time.

As one of the most important goals of the United Nations is to make the world renounce the idea of war and resort to peaceful means in settling disputes between States, it must be clear that the achievement of international security for all States can be brought about only through collective efforts that are inspired by shared human values which rule out hegemony, fanaticism and egoism.

Proceeding from this, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya attaches particular importance to the questions of disarmament and international security. This is given concrete form in the Jamahiriya's participation in deliberations on these issues and its adherence to the resolutions adopted by the United Nations treaties and its bodies and to multilateral treaties and conventions, in so doing, we proceed from the conviction that the production and stockpiling of weapons, particularly those weapons of mass destruction, pose a grave threat to international peace and security and constitute a source of terror for all mankind.

Our stand on the question of nuclear, chemical, bacteriological and biological weapons of mass destruction is unambiguously clear and has been reiterated on numerous occasions. Most recently, it has been spelt out in the statement made by Mr. Omar Mustafa Muntasser, the Secretary of the General People's Committee for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, before the General Assembly, on 3 October 1995, wherein he reaffirmed that:

> "The continued existence of nuclear weapons and the increased stockpiling of these and other weapons of mass destruction are among the principal concerns of the international community. When the first review Conference of the States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was held in the first half of this year, it was hoped that that Conference would lead to satisfactory results. However, what actually happened was that certain nuclear Powers brought to bear unprecedented pressures that made it possible for the NPT to be extended indefinitely. My country declared its opposition to this extension, and we remain convinced that extending the Treaty in that manner would never serve the objective of nuclear-weapon disarmament.
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> "The NPT has not achieved universality, and its many shortcomings have not been properly addressed. In our view, ridding the world of nuclear terror will not be achieved through gains obtained by manoeuvres and unconventional measures, but rather through serious measures, which must be taken by the nuclear States. In this context, the procurement of nuclear materials must be ended, and nuclear States must commit themselves to a deadline for the complete

elimination of all nuclear weapons. These States should put an end to nuclear tests and conclude, at the earliest possible time, a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Furthermore, the nuclear States should demonstrate the political will required to conclude an effective treaty guaranteeing the security and safety of non-nuclear States.

"Another situation that requires speedy corrective action involves the unjustified restriction on the transfer to non-nuclear States of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. Above all, measures should be taken to guarantee the universality of the NPT. My country attaches the greatest importance to this issue, because the region to which we belong suffers from a security imbalance, owing to the Israelis' tremendous nuclear capability — they have more than 200 nuclear warheads and nuclear facilities that are not subjected to international inspection.

"This represents a threat to the security and safety of the peoples of the region. No one should keep silent about a situation of this kind or accept the extension of the NPT as long as such a situation continues." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 17th meeting, p. 16)*

My country welcomes the efforts deployed at the regional level to create nuclear-weapon-free zones, in Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, the Middle East and South Asia. We believe that the conclusion of an agreement that would make the African continent a nuclear-weapon-free zone would be an important development which should be supported by all States.

Since 1974, considerable efforts have been made, on the initiative of a number of countries in the Middle East, to turn the region into a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Bearing in mind the conflicts that the Middle East has endured for such a long time, my country has supported the many resolutions on this matter, the latest of which was General Assembly resolution 49/71 of 15 December 1994.

However, this endeavour encounters a serious obstacle, the Israeli nuclear-weapon capability, supported by a great Power. If the desire to have this region turned into a nuclear-weapon-free zone is genuine, the international community — in particular, the great Powers that possess nuclear weapons — should prevail on the Israelis to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, to subject their nuclear facilities to inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency and to draw up a timetable for the destruction of their nuclear stockpiles.

With regard to conventional weapons, my country informed this Committee last year of the practical measures it had taken in disbanding the conventional army, demobilizing hundreds of thousands of troops and channelling their efforts towards development. This year, there has not been any budgetary allocation to armaments or military equipment.

My country welcomes the progress achieved at the latest Vienna Conference regarding the Protocol prohibiting the use of immoral and inhuman weapons which may cause permanent loss of sight. However, we regret that the Conference has not been able to make tangible progress in respect of the Protocol on anti-personnel land-mines.

As members of the Committee know, my country was one of the first to raise the question of land-mines and the sequelae of war. Libya's territory was the theatre of some of the largest land battles of World War II. Hundreds of thousands of land-mines were planted in our soil by the combatants. As is pointed out in document A/49/357, failure by the Allies and the Axis countries alike to remove these mines has resulted in huge damage and loss of life and has constituted a major obstacle to development projects. We have asked the countries concerned, bilaterally or through the United Nations, to provide us with maps of the minefields, to help us in the necessary demining operations and to pay compensation for the damage these mines have caused.

Our view of the gravity of this problem has been vindicated: it has become an issue which has been under consideration by the General Assembly since its forty-eighth session. The issue is now being considered comprehensively and not just from the perspective of mine clearance in different parts of the world. There is now a demand for discontinuing the production of such weapons and the prohibition of their exportation. We have participated in debating the issue at the 1995 Geneva Conference and have pledged contribution to the fund established for mine-clearance purposes.

Since the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly, held in 1981, the First Committee has been seized of the item on the strengthening of international peace and security in the Mediterranean. We have approached some countries of the region with a view to having it turned into a zone of peace and security. In our opinion, that could be achieved only through the withdrawal of foreign military

fleets and the removal of the military bases of the great Powers. Nothing could justify the presence of those fleets now that the cold war is over and there is no longer a threat of confrontation between two camps. In some cases, such fleets have been used in overt acts of provocation and direct aggression. This is what happened to my country in 1986, when Libyan cities were subjected to aggressive and barbaric air attacks, which resulted in scores of casualties and widespread material damage.

As in previous years, my country will actively support any draft resolution intended to promote efforts in this field.

Ms. Damusis (Lithuania): Earlier this week my delegation aligned itself with the statement made by the representative of Spain on behalf of the European Union and the associated countries, including the Republic of Lithuania. As our foreign Minister stated at the General Assembly last month, Lithuania is striving for full integration into European political, economic and collective-security structures. Membership of the European Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Western European Union is a high priority. We look forward to continuing our cooperation with, and participation in, pan-European security mechanisms embodied in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, further developing the experience of the Baltic Round-table of the European Stability Pact, and in subregional efforts such as those of the Council of the Baltic Sea States.

With the easing of East-West tensions, real prospects for far-reaching disarmament agreements have emerged. Nevertheless, great risks to international peace and security remain. In today's dramatically changed world, regional and subregional issues have assumed additional urgency and importance in the field of disarmament and international security.

Very important advances towards peace have been made in Latin America, Asia and some parts of Africa. Progress in disarmament has been made in Europe with the establishment of comprehensive confidence- and security-building measures, followed by agreements for drastic reductions in heavy weapons and armed forces. Nevertheless, in other parts of the world the symptoms of the cold war have not yet fully disappeared. Military expenditures and sales of weapons continue to increase at an unbridled rate.

Despite significant successes -- for instance, the signing of the Chemical Weapons Convention, the decision to extend the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons indefinitely, the regional and global impact of the Treaty on conventional forces in Europe and the progress made in negotiations towards a comprehensive test-ban treaty -- much remains to be done. These positive developments in the field of disarmament and on the global scene have improved the international climate, creating new opportunities and conditions more conducive to peaceful development and cooperation world wide.

Regrettably, however, before these profound changes could take hold, new tensions and new conflicts arose between individual States, subregions and even larger parts of regions, shaking the very foundation of the present system of international security. Aggressive nationalism, violations of human rights and other forms of intolerance have led to bloody excesses in the former Yugoslavia, in the territories of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and in Central Africa. The pursuit of regional approaches to disarmament has become all the more important in the face of these and other destabilizing situations.

Armed conflicts, as well as potential conflict-causing situations, are a constant reminder that the promotion of international peace and security can no longer be restricted to the prevention of a nuclear holocaust between the nuclear-weapon Powers or, at most, arranging cease-fires and the stationing of peace-keeping forces in areas of conflict between non-nuclear-weapon Powers. The focus must be on the creation of conditions whereby a potential conflict-causing situation would be dealt with before it could become a full-blown conflict. For that reason, arms control and disarmament have become an integral, comprehensive part of the international efforts to strengthen international peace and security.

Earlier disarmament efforts were directed towards stabilizing a precarious balance of power between two heavily armed alliances. Today, the new priority is to establish the highest possible degree of transparency and confidence among States, which would foster a new international security system. In this context, it is the firm conviction of Lithuania that States can make a genuine contribution to global security by refraining from the use or threat of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State or in any other manner inconsistent with the principles and purposes set forth in the Charter of the United Nations. The concept of "near abroad" does little to promote confidence and a climate of trust between States, particularly at the regional level.

Earlier this week, Slovenia noted that

> "While progress has been made on various aspects of the prevention and resolution of conflicts, there remains a substantial gap between the security requirements of the present world and existing international arrangements, which are mainly inherited from another and different era." (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, First Committee, 4th meeting, p. 4*)

We fully agree that we have yet to meet the challenge of a new Europe. New realities call for the creation of viable and effective security structures, including the enlargement of Western security arrangements to Central and Eastern Europe, as a way of avoiding a source of potential instability. As its contribution to the eastward expansion of stability and security and to the maintenance of international peace and security, Lithuania continues to foster good-neighbourly relations and to participate in the Partnership for Peace programme with a view to becoming a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Thus, the traditional approach to disarmament, working towards the reduction and elimination of the most dangerous and destabilizing types of weapons, needs to be supplemented by new dimensions of preventive diplomacy, which include conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peace-keeping efforts. This dual approach, with an emphasis on regional arrangements based on democratic principles, is in Lithuania's view one of the key objectives of creating a new international security system.

Lithuania believes that the success of our disarmament efforts will be largely based on three major areas. First, there must be substantial reductions in conventional weapons and personnel. A huge amount of human and financial resources is still devoted to the production, acquisition and trade in conventional arms. The situation is further aggravated by the potential glut of weapons coming on the market as a result of the end of cold-war rivalries and domestic pressures, which call for the continuation of the production of excessive amounts of conventional weapons. In some areas bordering Lithuania, the excessively high concentration of armed forces and the ambiguous nature of their purpose is not in keeping with the new political-military realities of the region.

The second area is that of the development of policies to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons to new States. With the process of real nuclear disarmament having begun, it would be detrimental and dangerous if any new nuclear-weapon State were to emerge. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and compatible bilateral or regional arrangements are of supreme importance in this regard.

We are also alarmed at the numerous incidents of illicit trafficking in nuclear materials. The frequency of these incidents and the risks associated with them should compel the international community to take up coordinated efforts leading to the elimination of such occurrences. This problem appears to arise from an inadequate system of physical protection, deficient systems of accounting and control, and insufficient border controls on such material. International assistance should be encouraged, especially in cases where old safeguards are eroding or have fallen away or where nuclear materials are suddenly for sale.

The third area is that of the use of international mechanisms for keeping the peace and ending human tragedies, such as that now occurring in Bosnia. Lithuania continues to participate in United Nations peace-keeping operations. Since August 1994, three Lithuanian platoons have taken part in the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia within the Danish peace-keeping battalion. Lithuania is prepared to consider eventual participation in the peace-implementation operation in Bosnia.

The ideological division of the world was not defeated by military force but by the power of the human spirit. We are convinced that, against what often seem like insurmountable odds, the collective political will of States can help reduce tensions and find solutions to conflicts so that our world can become a more peaceful and secure place.

Mr. Çelem (Turkey): Let me begin by congratulating the Chairman on his election to preside over this historic session of the First Committee, which coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. I am confident that, under his wise and able leadership, this Committee will be successfully guided through its challenging agenda. I would also like to extend my congratulations to the other members of the Bureau.

We live in extraordinary times full of stark contrasts. On the bright side, the end of bipolarity freed the international community from political and ideological constraints. Today, a sense of global responsibility is growing. On the dark side, long-suppressed evil forces, such as xenophobic and ethnic nationalism, racism and intolerance have come to the surface, creating new

tensions, crises and conflicts. They constitute new threats to international peace and security.

The fiftieth anniversary is the most opportune time to revisit and recall the principles and ideals enshrined in the United Nations Charter. We must address the challenges of our times with the vision of the founders of this Organization. The main responsibility of the United Nations is, obviously, the maintenance of international peace and security, the prevention and removal of threats to peace. Fortunately, with the end of the cold war, the prospects for arms control and disarmament, as key instruments for greater security and preventive diplomacy, have improved considerably. Never before has there been a greater opportunity for global cooperative action to this end. We must seize it and address the challenges ahead effectively.

Last year we observed clear signs of progress in the realm of disarmament and global security. The decision to extend the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) indefinitely represents an achievement of historic significance. We were also pleased to see important progress on the road to achieving our common goal of universal adherence to the NPT. The decision on indefinite extension, which reflects a delicate compromise, should also be viewed in the light of the commitment undertaken by the nuclear-weapon States at the Review and Extension Conference of the NPT earlier this year. They have committed themselves to exercising utmost restraint in nuclear tests pending the entry into force of a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

In this respect, we continue to expect that nuclear tests will not adversely affect the timely conclusion of the proposed treaty. With this in mind, we have taken note of the announcement made in this regard. We welcome the commitment of France, the United Kingdom and the United States to a true zero-yield ban as significant contributions to the negotiations. Turkey supports the agreed objective of concluding a comprehensive test-ban treaty, which will have to be universal and internationally and effectively verifiable, no later than 1996. In this context, we continue to follow the negotiations in Geneva closely.

The next priority on the disarmament agenda should be an agreement banning the production of fissile material for weaponry purposes. Furthermore, the inefficiency in controlling the removal and transfer of fissile material has emerged as a serious problem in the post-cold-war era. We strongly believe that the time has come to adopt responsible policies and effective mechanisms to control the transfer of nuclear material. In this context, I would like to emphasize the fundamental role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We are committed to continuing our support of the ongoing process to strengthen the IAEA safeguards system through the 93+2 programme.

We also attach great importance to two other decisions adopted at the NPT Conference: the decisions on "Strengthening the Review Process for the Treaty" and on "Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament".

The proliferation of any type of weapon of mass destruction constitutes a serious threat to international peace and security. The Convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons (CWC) and the biological and toxin weapons Convention are significant international instruments which demonstrate the will of the international community to free the world from these types of weapons. The non-proliferation regimes regarding the weapons of mass destruction are vital for a safer world. However, it is equally compelling to strengthen these regimes by the addition of legally binding verification procedures to the relevant international instruments.

With this in mind, we have resolutely supported the strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention with additional verification provisions. We will continue to follow these efforts and hope that a conclusion will be reached at the next Review Conference, in 1996.

Turkey, as a signatory to the Chemical Weapons Convention, considers universal adherence to it vitally important. We are about to finalize the process of ratification of this Convention.

The eruption of ethnic conflicts has amply demonstrated the vital role of regional arms control and disarmament efforts in buttressing the global endeavour to enhance stability and security. The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), as the cornerstone of European security, has established a stable and secure balance at lower levels of conventional armed forces. Turkey took all the necessary steps for the implementation of the Treaty and expects all States parties to it to fully abide by its provisions. Any violation of such a critical international legal instrument will certainly create an atmosphere of mistrust, and this will obviously not be in the best interests of European security. It will adversely affect the climate of confidence which constitutes the basis of global security. Thus, it is our sincere hope that the States parties to the CFE will take full account of the global security dimension of this issue and of their responsibilities

in this regard before making their final decision on compliance with this Treaty.

The Middle East is especially important for my country in the context of the need to broaden the scope of arms control and other security-building endeavours to embrace all the regions of the world. Now the chances of achieving this noble aim in the Middle East are greater than ever. Turkey is actively participating in the multilateral track of the meetings of the Arms Control and Regional Security Working Group of the Middle East peace process. We are convinced that the difficulties faced on the way to the eventual realization of the confidence-building measures can be solved when progress is achieved at the political level.

Similarly, we sincerely hope that cooperation and confidence-building in Asia will succeed and contribute to international security. I would like to commend Kazakstan and Turkmenistan for their initiatives in this regard. We are fully cognizant of the potential of these efforts, and thus extend our support to them. We hope that in time these initiatives can be institutionalized and form the basis for developing concrete confidence-building measures suitable for the needs of the region. We expect that, in a true Eurasian spirit, all these efforts will be integrated into a whole.

Transparency in armaments is an important component of efforts aimed at building confidence and reducing unpredictability at a regional as well as at the universal level. The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is a key instrument in the efforts to increase international confidence. However, in order for this instrument to function effectively, all Member States must submit their reports. In order to ensure that all Member States submit reports for the Register specific methods should be developed to encourage Member States to do so. We also consider it important that the Register be expanded to include procurement from national production.

The Conference on Disarmament in Geneva is the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. However, owing to its cold war-design, it is structurally incapable of responding to the changing political realities of our times. The widely shared opinion is that the Conference on Disarmament should be expanded. Turkey strongly supports this opinion. The maintenance of the momentum created by the latest decision of the Conference on Disarmament (CD/1356) is significant for its prestige, and would secure fruitful results in the Geneva talks.

The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations provides a historic opportunity for learning lessons from past experiences and preparing ourselves for the challenges that lie ahead. We have to continue to work together with a shared goal of making the world a better and safer place.

Mr. Cole (Australia): I have asked to speak in order to respond briefly to the welcome joint announcement made earlier today by France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America of their intention to sign the relevant Protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga in the first half of 1996, thereby joining Russia and China, which had previously signed and ratified the two Protocols open to them.

The Australian Government warmly welcomes this announcement. Australia has been urging the importance and benefits of this step for some time. This concrete recognition of the positive role of nuclear-weapon-free zones augurs well for the further development of international peace and security in the aftermath of the Review and Extension Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and pursuant to the encouragement given there to the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones as a matter of priority.

The signing and ratification of the Protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga by all of the nuclear-weapon States has been a major objective of the South Pacific Forum, and something for which the Australian Government has been working for a long time. The Treaty of Rarotonga is the principal institutional expression of the desire of all South Pacific countries to live in a region free of nuclear weapons and nuclear testing.

In our view, by signing the Protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga, the United States, France and the United Kingdom will send a positive non-proliferation message to the entire international community and will help to drive the comprehensive test-ban treaty negotiations towards their successful completion within the first half of 1996.

I have to say that while Australia welcomes the commitment made by France to sign and ratify the Protocols, it does not lessen our resolve to see an end now to French nuclear testing in the South Pacific. Our goal remains an immediate cessation of such testing.

Mr. Markram (South Africa): My Government welcomes the joint statement made today by the Governments of France, the United Kingdom and the United States of their intention to sign the relevant Protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga in the first half of 1996.

We further welcome their reference to paragraphs 5, 6 and 7 of the Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, which pertains to the recognition of the fact that the cooperation of all the nuclear-weapon States and their respect and support for the relevant protocols is necessary for the maximum effectiveness of such nuclear-weapon-free zones and the relevant protocols.

We look forward to a similar announcement being made by the nuclear-weapon States with regard to the African nuclear-weapon-free zone, and reiterate our call to the weapon States to sign the relevant Protocols of the African Treaty as soon as they become available for signature.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.